



Bird Beak Detectives

Materials

- 2D bird skull replicas
- Detective observation sheet (below)
- Bird Beak Detectives PowerPoint and projector

Prep

Explain to students that birds have different shaped beaks based on what they eat, and the niche that they fill in the environment. Explain that a niche is a particular animal's function in the ecosystem. Think of it like the animal's job. All of those jobs fit together and interact, making the ecosystem function properly. Explain to students that they are going to be bird beak detectives, and will have to do some sleuthing to identify seven different bird skulls.

How to

- Place the bird skull replicas on different desks or tables around the room. You can split students into pairs or groups, depending on the size of your class and what will work best for your students. Place a sticky note with the number of that station next to each replica. There are 9 skull replicas. Here is the identification key:
 - #1: Northern cardinal
 - #2: Bald eagle
 - #3: Cormorant
 - #4: Wild turkey
 - #5: Canada goose
 - #6: Pileated woodpecker
 - #7: Common raven
 - #8: Great blue heron
 - #9: Barn owl

- Ask a group or several groups to gather around one skull station. There should be students gathered at all 9 stations. Give students some time to examine the skull and write down some observations on their detective sheets.
- Ask the students to proceed to the next skull station to record observations about the next skull. Repeat until all students have visited all 9 stations.
- Ask students to sit at their desks, and go through each of the stations. Ask students to share their observations about Skull #1. Ask for some predictions about the identity of the bird.
- Project the solution slide. After sharing observations/predictions, for Skull #1, ask students to make a final deduction as detectives. Click to reveal the identity of Bird #1. Repeat for stations 2-9. (Numbers will appear on the slide with each click, so only click when students have settled on a final deduction to avoid revealing the answers too soon!)



Be a Bird Beak Detective!

Station Number	Write down 3 things you notice about this skull.	What do you think this bird eats?	Guess which bird this is!	The correct answer is...
1				
2				
3				
4				

Station Number	Write down 3 things you notice about this skull.	What do you think this bird eats?	Guess which bird this is!	The correct answer is...
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				